

LWVMC Endorses Parks & Open Space Measure A

Monday, March 7

11:30am - 1:00pm on Zoom

March Monthly Meeting



“Pathways to Fair and Inclusive Elections: Ranked Choice Voting, Proportional Representation, and The Fair Representation Act”

Partisan gerrymandering and uncompetitive elections undermine representative government. Under our current system of single member, winner-take-all districts, 9 states send **only RED** representatives to Congress and 6 states send **only BLUE**. Imagine how many voters are without representation in the “People’s House.”



David Daley will discuss how the “Fair Representation Act,” H.R. 3863, proposes to fix this by electing our representatives in multi-member, independently drawn districts, using ranked choice voting.



Paula Lee, who presented at our March, 2021 Member Meeting, is back to tell us more about Ranked Choice Voting—what it is and how it works as a pathway to more inclusive elections.

[Register Here](#)

Monday, April 4

11:30am - 1:00pm on Zoom

April Monthly Meeting



“An Equitable Rolling Recovery From COVID-19”

Speakers: Melissa Jones and Jamillah Jordan



Melissa Jones is Executive Director of the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII), a coalition of Bay Area public health departments and community partners



Jamillah Jordan is Marin County’s new Equity Director. She previously served on the Marin County Race equity Planning Committee.

[Register Here](#)

See p. 8 for more information about our speakers.



Why Measure A is Important

On February 15, the Marin County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved the Measure A (Parks and Open Space) sales tax renewal for the June 7 ballot. The LWVMC Board voted to endorse Measure A and announced our intent to the BOS.

Measure A authorizes renewal of a countywide, 1/4 cent sales tax to support parks, open space, and agricultural land across Marin. The spending plan maintains the original allocation of 65% to Parks and Open Space, 20% to Sustainable Agriculture, and 15% to City and Town Parks. (For more information click here: <https://www.marinlwv.org/about-measure-a>.)

There has been debate over the spending plan, including arguments about funding for wildfire prevention and about using tax funds for agricultural programs, particularly to purchase easements*.

Our Measure A Study Group began meeting in January to gather information about the new Measure A plan and to gain a better understanding of the arguments raised by stakeholders. Here are some of the people we talked to and what we learned.

Mark Brown, Executive Officer, Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWWPA)

- ◆ We asked about MWWPA's role in fire protection and how their work relates to wildfire prevention efforts by Marin County Parks and Open Space (funded by Measure A) and if Measure C provides all needed funds.
- ◆ We learned that MWWPA serves as a "convener of resources," working collaboratively with its 17 agencies on projects related to wildfire protection. Measure C money is not enough to do this work. The additional money from Measure A is needed.

Sue Conley, former MALT Board member and co-founder Cowgirl Creamery

- ◆ We wanted to learn more about agriculture in West Marin and about MALT's role in supporting Marin's farmers and ranchers.
- ◆ Sue told us the best chance of keeping local food production viable in Marin is through Measure A funding for agricultural easements. This makes it possible for small family-owned farms to follow sustainable farming and land management practices to address wildfire protection and climate change. These farms and ranches also provide a livelihood for the Latinx population and support West Marin's culturally diverse community.

Nancy Scolari, Executive Director of Marin Resource Conservation District (RCD)

- ◆ We asked Nancy to explain the importance of Measure A funded carbon farming programs and how they address climate change.
- ◆ She said that the health of the landscape is dependent upon healthy farming. Measure A funds enable Marin RCD to work with local farmers to implement practices like carbon farming, thereby helping to meet County Climate Action Plan goals. Under the new Measure A, funds to RCD are increased and are not limited to easement-protected farms and ranches.

Bill Long, Chair of the Board of Directors, Marin Open Space Trust (MOST)

- ◆ We asked about land acquisition for open space in Marin and the role MOST plays.
- ◆ He said that a portion of Measure A money supports the purchase of land targeted for open space. MOST works with Marin County Parks and other local land preservation organizations to support land protection goals through conservation easements and to raise community awareness about the importance of protecting critical properties. Measure A represents about 1/3 of the Parks land acquisition budget.

By the time this article is published, we will also have heard from Stefan Parnay, Agricultural Commissioner, Director of Weights and Measures, Marin County Department of Agriculture to learn more about the economic impact and benefits of agriculture to the entire county.

The study group has more work to do. Stay tuned for updates!

*Agricultural easements are voluntary agreements that give landowners the option to sell the right to develop their agricultural property to another entity, such as a conservation district or land trust, such as MALT. For more details about easements go to marinlwv.org.



COLLEGE OF MARIN STUDENTS NEED OUR HELP!

Students returned to College of Marin classes in January, for the first time since Covid. We learned that the adjustment to in-classroom learning after virtual lessons is difficult for some; the economic hardships for many are similar to those they experienced two years ago. That is when donations from our members, matched by the League's Education Foundation, made a grant of \$6,000 to COM for a new Student Emergency Assistance Fund.

Last spring, our grant to the same fund was \$10,000, thanks to the generosity of our members and non-members and another matching grant from the Education Foundation. The Education Foundation's trustees learned last week that student financial needs are as severe as ever: for housing, food, medical care, books, baby-sitting, transportation, and given that, decided to support the Student Emergency Assistance Fund another year.

We are asking you, our members, to contribute once again. Our goal is \$6,000 in contributions to be matched by \$6,000 from the Education Foundation. Last year our \$10,000 grant was 20% of the \$50,000 COM received from all donors to this fund. Our share was significant! We are helping hundreds of students continue their education under difficult circumstances.

We encourage you to contribute generously to the Student Emergency Assistance Fund. You can do so by [going to our website](#) or by writing a check (made out to Marin League of Voters Education Foundation) and mailing it to LWVMC, Education Foundation, 4340 Redwood Highway, Ste. F-133, San Rafael, CA. 94903.

Julie Monson, Chair, Laurie Nardone, Treasurer, Elaine Biagini, Secretary, Ann Batman, Scott McGown, Kay Noguchi, and Ann Wakeley

Please Be Our (Social Media) Friend!

If you have accounts on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, then please Follow our League (@LWVMarin) and "Like" and "Share" our posts! This is very helpful to amplify our messages, especially election information. For better or for worse, many voters get their information on social media – let's make sure it's accurate!

THANK YOU!



Marin County Free Library Parks Pass Program

Spring is just around the corner. The hills are green and wildflowers starting to bloom, putting on Mother Nature’s annual show. What better time to get outside and explore our local parks!



Did you know that you can check out a park pass from your local library funded by the Marin County Parks Department?

The Marin County Free Library Parks Pass Program was created through a partnership with the County of Marin Parks Department. Through the lens of economic equity, it became clear that the entry and parking fees at County parks systems (up to \$10 at that time) were a barrier for some to access parks. Not only would many people not be able to visit our iconic local resources but they would miss out on the health and wellness benefits of our open space, beaches, and walking trails.

Using Measure A Marin County Parks funds, the Marin County Free Library launched the Parks Pass Program in 2019 to much enthusiasm among library patrons. The parks participating in the program include Marin County Parks, MMWD, and Mt. Tamalpais State Park.

In the first year alone, the Parks Passes became the highest circulating item, surpassing all other physical materials including books and CDs. During the past three years almost 3,000 passes/per year have been loaned out with an estimated 14,905 circulation for each year. That’s almost five users per pass!

In June 2021, the State of California, in partnership with the California State Library, honored MCFL and the County Parks Department’s Parks Pass Program as a model program and funded the program to move statewide. Now library and park systems across the state have access to funds to bring similar programs to their counties, cities and towns.

Here’s how it works. Use your library card to check out a Park Pass for free entry and parking at the three local participating parks systems. Then, hang the pass from the rear-view mirror of the car or place it on the dashboard for that day’s use. Your Park Passes can be checked out for one week at a time and be renewed twice, annually.

So, click on the link below, secure your Parks Pass, put on your walking shoes, and enjoy all the beauty Marin has to offer.

Hope to see you there!

[Free Library Park Pass - Marin County Parks](#)

Sue Ream, Education and Libraries Committee



Marin County Free Library WebStars Celebrate 25 Years

In 1997 with the opening of the new Marin City Library branch, WebStars was born. Supervisor Annette Rose, founder of the program, helped to raise funds to launch the program with in-kind donations and grants from the Gates Foundation.

Modeled on the *High School Explainers* program at the Exploratorium, WebStars was designed to empower young people through computer training. It gives them opportunities to work with the public in a library setting, participate in an internship program with a local technology company, or pursue a career in the library field.

The WebStar Program also reaches out to local non-profit agencies to provide support in accessing information and building up the Community Network. The Community Network consists of community members and agencies working to build a more prosperous Marin City

Today, WebStars teach free computer classes at the library. The classes include computer programs and technologies including PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, email and the Internet. They provide community technical support with photography, social media, website maintenance and video/video editing, 3D printing and an introduction to VR (Virtual Reality).

As participants in this program, WebStars are not only gaining valuable technology expertise, but learning responsibility, increasing self-esteem and building maturity while interacting with patrons and members of the community.

WebStars has a proven track record of success with 75% of participants going on to college. Past

WebStars are pursuing careers in the fields of social work, public relations, computer animation, nursing, and architecture, to name a few. Two former WebStars have gone on to library careers; one is a full-time school librarian at Dr. Martin Luther King Academy and the other is a full-time staff supervisor at the Marin City branch.

Twice, WebStars have traveled to Washington DC, in 2018 to speak with Congressperson Jared Huffman about federal library funding and again in June 2019 to speak at the annual American Library Association conference. Both times they were lauded for this great success story.

Over the years the program has expanded from the Marin City branch to South Novato, the Northgate Pop-Up and a collaboration with the San Rafael Public Library. With a grant from Exploratorium, WebStars has more recently moved into West Marin to work with another underserved Marin community.

The MCFL WebStar program looks forward to another 25 years of Marin County youth working to promote Equity in our communities, libraries and as they like to say.... The World.

The Marin County Free Library WebStars are here to help you conquer the world of technology.



Sue Ream, Education and Libraries



Life Without Parole is a Criminal Justice Issue

by Kristi Denham

(Kristi was the speaker at the February Justice Committee meeting)

Governor Gavin Newsom has closed death row at San Quentin Prison and the news was heralded as a step forward for criminal justice reform; but changing all those sentenced to death into people sentenced to life without the possibility of parole is truly a living death penalty. Those on death row had access to lawyers and appeals. Those sentenced to life without parole (LWOP) have no access to legal counsel, will never meet with a parole board and can look forward to nothing but four walls, three meals, and hopelessness.

Our local League and the California League of Women Voters have been learning more about this reality and are active in working to pass SB 300 that would change some of the draconian laws passed during the 1990's "tough on crime" era, so that fewer individuals are sentenced to LWOP (life without parole).

Under existing law, if a person dies during the commission of certain felonies, even if the death is accidental, those involved in the underlying felony are subject to mandatory death sentences even though the death was not caused by their action or intent. Victims of domestic and sexual violence are particularly vulnerable to this extreme sentencing. Current law mandates that abuse survivors receive life without parole or the death penalty for the actions of their abusers or actions that resulted from the coercive control of their abusers. Youth, especially youth of color, are vulnerable to extreme sentencing under current law. **In California, 19 is the most common age of those sentenced to life without parole. 63 percent of those serving life without parole were under 25 at the time of the offense.** People of color are targeted for extreme sentencing under *felony murder special circumstances* law. 80 percent of people sentenced to life without parole in California are people of color. 68 percent are Black or Latinx.

If you would like to learn more go to: DROPLWOP at droplwop.com

March Justice Committee Meeting - All Members Welcome

Justice Committee will host **Moms Demand Action** on Thursday, March 10 at 10 a.m.
[Register Here](#)

Speakers: Janet Gennai Rizzi, Marin Moms Demand Action Group Leader and Helen Rosen, California Team - Moms Demand Action.

Every day, more than 110 Americans are killed with guns. Learn about the latest policy changes and upcoming legislation to make gun ownership safer for us, our families, and our communities. Also hear what action steps you might take to help save lives.

Nancy Weber, Justice Committee

VOTER EDUCATION & OUTREACH TEAM UPDATE

Pat Beaupre has joined the Team to work on outreach to community organizations!

Reaching voters through trusted messengers is a critical part of our team's work, so Pat's enthusiasm for her new role is an exciting boost to the effectiveness of our voter education. Our [current Voter Guide](#) (April 12 special election) is posted on the website.

Our work with the Marin County Elections Department continues through our role on the Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee (VEOAC).

The Elections Department has posted a description of this Advisory Committee with a list of the members on their website: <https://www.marincounty.org/depts/rv/advisory-committees/tabs-voter-education-and-outreach-advisory-committee>

The work of the VEOAC is focused on educating voters about the Voter's Choice Act election model coming to Marin County starting with the June 7 Statewide Primary Election. *More Days, More Ways to Vote!*

WE NEED MORE MEMBERS to empower the voters of Marin County - PLEASE JOIN US!

Robin Diederich, Team Leader, VoterEd@Marinlww.org

VOTER SERVICE LEADERSHIP CHANGE

After chairing our Voter Service Committee for two years, I have decided to refocus my energy and step away as Chair to lead our *NEW* Voter Education & Outreach Team. Despite several months of recruitment, we have been unable to find a replacement for the Committee Chair position. While the search continues for a Voter Service Committee Chair/Coordinator, each Voter Service Team Leader will take on the administrative duties for their Team.

Please reach out if you have an interest in a leadership role for our League's Voter Service work.

Robin Diederich, VoterEd@marinlww.org

OUR WEBSITE NEEDS YOU AND YOU NEED OUR WEBSITE!

Marinlww.org continues to be our League's tool for communication within our League as well as with the public. Please continue to use the **FOR MEMBERS** tab to stay up to date on League activities and events. We also hope you are using the rest of our website and share it with people you know! We have local, state and national news and information. Want to *Take Action*? We have a tab for that! Want to know if LWV has an opinion about or has taken any action on an issue? We have a tab for that too - check out our NEWS-ROOM!

We'd love to hear from you about how we can make Marinlww.org more useful for you, our members. We're open to any input and feedback you'd like to share!

Robin Diederich & Scott McKown, webmaster@marinlww.org

Some More information About Upcoming Monthly Meetings Speakers

March 7 Meeting

David Daley is the author of the national best-seller "Ratf**ked: Why Your Vote Doesn't Count" and "Unrigged: How Americans Are Battling Back to Save Democracy." "Ratf**ked" has been credited with helping to inspire the national drive to reform redistricting and was the basis of the award-winning documentary "Slay the Dragon." Eric Holder called him "our Paul Revere of partisan gerrymandering." His journalism on voting rights and democracy appears regularly in the New Yorker, the New York Times, the Atlantic, the Guardian and many other publications. He is the former editor-in-chief of Salon, a senior fellow at FairVote, and has taught political science and journalism as a fellow at Wesleyan University, Boston College and the University of Georgia.

Paula Lee is Advocacy Director and Past President of the LWV of Sacramento County and Vice President of Californians for Electoral Reform. For her more than 20 years with the League, she has been an active and steadfast leader on electoral reform. Her work has led Leagues in cities and states across the country to study electoral systems and to take a broader and more critical view of how we go about electing our leaders and representatives. The result of these efforts is our new California State Position on Electoral Process (adopted in 2019) and our National Position on Voter Representation/Electoral Systems (adopted in 2020). These Positions promote representative government and support alternatives to plurality voting, including Ranked Choice Voting and Proportional Representation.



April 4 Meeting

Melissa Jones is the Executive Director of the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII), a coalition of Bay Area public health departments and community partners. Under Melissa's leadership, BARHII has become an essential voice helping pass groundbreaking legislation (including expanded paid sick leave, rent-gouging rules, pandemic-related eviction prohibitions, and climate justice programs) that has saved tens of thousands of lives and improved the health of communities impacted by systemic inequities. Melissa brought to BARHII twenty years of experience in non-profit and municipal government and with the nation's largest community development intermediary, where she was awarded the LISC President's Award for excellence in comprehensive community development. She co-chaired two efforts focused on Equitable Recovery in the Bay Area and served on the California COVID-19 Justice Inaugural Steering Committee. Over the last five years she has trained over 1500 government officials in California in Adaptive Leadership for Racial Equity. She serves on several boards including the Association of Bay Area Government's Regional Planning Commission. Melissa is a proud resident of Oakland.

Jamillah Jordan is Marin County's new Equity Director. She previously served on the Marin County Race Equity Planning Committee. Jamillah is an accomplished community organizer, planner and project manager for organizations such as Caltrans, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education. Recently, Jamillah facilitated the Berkeley Global Campus Community Benefits Agreement, working with several ad-hoc committees to build equity goals and action plans, refine their decision-making process, and resolve inevitable conflicts that arose as U.C. Berkeley worked to address multiple community needs. The culmination of her work was a set of consensus recommendations and a narrative report that was unanimously approved.



League of Women Voters of Marin County
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“Sonoma State University Students’ Perspectives on Voting Rights”

Monday, April 11 12 noon on Zoom



Attention Making Democracy Work fans! Save the date: Monday, April 11th at noon for a very special and engaging presentation.

Once again, the Marin and Sonoma Leagues are joining forces to present a dynamic program focused on democracy—this time, in partnership with Dr. David McCuan, Chair of the Political Science Department at Sonoma State University.

Two of Dr. McCuan's Senior Seminar students, Haley Provencher and Will Stephenson, are teaming up to look at two related issues in slightly different ways: “Voting Rights Access and Barriers to Voting” and the “Effects of 'Fake News' on Voting Access/Voting Information.” It is sure to be a fascinating and thought provoking presentation!

[Register Here](#)